

So, I just think we are not going to accomplish anything of any great dimension in terms of the intent of the amendment—to give the local communities more flexibility with spending. We have cut the States out, and we have a direct linkage now between the Secretary of Education and every local school district—with language just open, ripe for being changed from “shall” to “may” if we should ever lose the majority here.

Reluctantly, I have concluded that this amendment would be a very serious mistake if we were to pass it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I believe my friend and colleague from Vermont has stated the arguments on his side forcefully and eloquently and has illustrated, as I hope I have, the fundamental philosophical differences over this amendment, over any amendment that is even remotely similar to this.

The Senator from Vermont believes that a large number of educational priorities ought to be set here in the Congress of the United States by the Secretary of Education and the people who work in his department. Certainly there is an appropriate theory in this country that that is true, that the U.S. Department of Education ought to be able to impose significant controls over State departments of education and even more detailed controls over every school district in the United States, and that in the absence of such requirements not only will money be wasted but the quality of the educational product will be depreciated, will be less.

I don't know that there is much out there in the educational field that indicates any huge degree of success on the part of this top-down set of educational priorities. But nonetheless, it is possible to make such an argument.

My argument, and this is where the Senator from Vermont and I disagree, is that I believe informed parents, informed teachers who are in the classroom every single day of their professional lives, informed and dedicated administrators and school board members, most of whom are elected to non-paying jobs, not only have an interest in the quality of education that they supply to their children, their students, the young people in their community, but that they are better able to determine how the money they have from whatever source is spent toward those ends than can we here, or anyone in a Washington, DC bureaucracy.

As a consequence, this amendment says get rid of the regulations that apply to the programs that are covered by it, distribute the money directly to the school districts that are providing education and let them spend it as they will.

At one level, of course, that does bypass State education entities in order that they not spend any of the money or hold any of it back, but it does not prevent any State education entity

from saying you have to instruct the mathematics, history, whatever they wish to do, to set a curriculum, much of which is set by the States.

It just says with Federal money, the Federal Government is not going to tell you how to spend it. It is as simple as that.

We are not talking about local governments. The phrase in this amendment is “local education agencies.” By and large, though not entirely, single-purpose school districts.

To say what this really means is that people in these local communities will immediately take the new money and not spend it on education but do something else with it or provide property tax relief, in my view, evidences a great lack of trust in the fact that our citizens care about the education of their children.

I think we know from all of the surveys in which we engage, from all the speeches we make, from all the people we listen to, that our citizens care very deeply about the education of their children, and to say if we do not force them to spend money in particular ways here in Washington, DC, they will not spend it at all, that they will ignore our kids, is without any evidence, in fact, in the real world.

Much of this money is getting through to these school districts right now. I differ with the Senator from Vermont on how much we are talking about. We have not, by any of the changes of this amendment, taken out impact aid, disability education, or 50 percent of local education. They were never in the first version.

With respect to title I, we have not taken it out. We just have a somewhat different distribution formula. The same number of dollars is involved now as when I first discussed it earlier. The point, roughly 85 percent of this money is somehow or another getting at least down to the State level at the present time. Added money that school districts will get will be the money we save in administration here and in State capitals. I am convinced it will all go into the education of our children. But the number of dollars, the additional dollars, even if they can be measured, will not be nearly as important as the removal of Federal regulatory detail.

The Senator from Idaho described the situation in one of his districts, which I believe is pretty close to universal: 10 percent of the money comes from the Federal Government and 60 percent of the rules. That is a terrible imbalance. We would like to get rid of almost all of those 60 percent of the rules and power our school districts, power our teachers, and power our parents and see whether or not they cannot do a somewhat better job than the rather poor job we have done so far ourselves.

I yield the floor.

AMENDMENT NO. 1090 WITHDRAWN

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator MACK, I ask unanimous consent amendment No. 1090 be withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1110

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the pending amendments be set aside and the Senate turn to consideration of amendment No. 1110 to S. 1061.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 1110, AS MODIFIED

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President I send a modification to the amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the amendment is so modified.

The amendment (1110), as modified, is as follows:

On page 9, line 11, strike “\$3,292,476,000” and insert in lieu thereof: “\$3,288,476,000”.

On page 10, line 18, strike “\$216,333,000” and insert in lieu thereof: “\$212,333,000”.

On page 12, line 11, strike “\$84,308,000” and insert in lieu thereof: “\$88,308,000”.

Mr. GORTON. This amendment provides \$4 million to the Department of Labor for the administration of the welfare-to-work job training program authorized and funded in the recently enacted Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

The administration had requested \$6.2 million but the level was reduced in the amendment because of concerns raised by the Finance Committee.

The additional funds are fully offsetted.

The amendment has been cleared on both sides. I urge its adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 1110), as modified, was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent there now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d-276g, as amended, appoints the following Senators as members of the Senate delegation to the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group during the 1st session of the 105th Congress, to be held in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Canada, September 11 through 15, 1997:

The Senator from Washington [Mrs. MURRAY], Vice Chair; the Senator from Maryland [Mr. SARBANES]; and the Senator from Hawaii [Mr. AKAKA].

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday,